

Message Text

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22

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 SP-02 PM-04 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1582

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 6690

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS EC PINS

SUBJ: NATIONAL DISCLOSURE POLICY FOR ECUADOR

REFS: A) STATE 226647 B) QUITO 3923 C) SECDEF 130042 AUG 76

1. SUMMARY: THE MISSION'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION IN QUITO 3923 ON THE GOE'S ABILITY TO HANDLE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WERE IN ERROR. ANALYSIS OF THE CABLE ITSELF INDICATES THAT THE DESCRIPTION OF THE GOE'S SECURITY PROCEDURES ARE ADEQUATE IN FORM, AND THAT CRITICAL COMMENTS WERE BASED LARGELY SUSPICION AND/OR SPECULATION. GOE RECENTLY REAFFIRMED BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE SECURITY ACCEPTABLE TO USG FOR CLASSIFIED TRAINING AND DEFENSE SERVICES. MISSION BELIEVES THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION CAN AND SHOULD BE PROVIDED GOE ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. NOT TO DO SO WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH OUR PROVIDING SUCH INFORMATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES WITH EQUAL OR WORSE SECURITY SYSTEMS. IT WOULD ALSO DO CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO US-ECUADOREAN RELATIONS WHICH REST IN LARGE PART ON OUR MILITARY TO MILITARY PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

2. QUITO 3923 WAS CLEARED WIDELY WITHIN THIS MISSION (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MILITARY LIAISON OFFICE-MLO, WHICH DUE TO AN OVERSIGHT WAS NOT CONSULTED). UPON RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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VIEWING THAT CABLE, IT IS THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE

MISSION, INCLUDING MLO AND DAO, THAT THE CONCLUSIONS CONTAINED THEREIN ARE TOO STRONG. FURTHER THEY ARE NOT BORNE OUT BY THE DESCRIPTION OF ECUADOREAN SECURITY PRACTICES WITHIN THE CABLE ITSELF.

3. THE CABLE DESCRIBED PROCEDURES IN WHICH SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS OF SECURITY ARE INVESTIGATED BY MILITARY LAWYERS AND INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS; CLEARANCES ARE USED AND PROCESSED IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER AS WITHIN THE US MILITARY; SAFES SIMILAR TO US SECURITY CONTAINERS ARE USED TO PROTECT DOCUMENTS; AND AREAS CONTAINING SUCH DOCUMENTS ARE UNDER TWENTY-FOUR HOUR ARMED GUARD; DISSEMINATION OF CLASSIFIED MATERIAL IS CONTROLLED, WITH AN ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING SYSTEM; AND DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS IS ACHIEVED BY INCINERATORS AND SHREDDERS. THE REPORTED INSTANCES OF PASSING CONFIDENTIAL AND RESERVED PAPERS FROM GOE TO USDAO THROUGH NORMAL EMBASSY NON-CLASSIFIED CHANNELS, ALTHOUGH NOT RECEIPTED, HAVE INVARIABLY BEEN PRECEDED BY A PHONE CALL AND HAND-DELIVERED. SUCH DELIVERIES ARE ALWAYS MADE BY SENIOR NCOS OR OFFICERS.

4. IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT ECUADOREAN SECURITY PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES IN GENERAL DO NOT REACH THE LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS OF US PRACTICES. NONETHELESS, THE BASIS OF AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM EXISTS AND IN SPITE OF OUR ANALYTICALLY ILL-PREPARED REF B, WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOE IS CAPABLE OF EFFECTIVELY PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WHEN THE NECESSITY OF DOING SO IS MADE CLEAR. MEMBERS OF THIS MISSION WITH EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES AGREE THAT ECUADOREAN SECURITY PRACTICES ARE NO WORSE THAN MOST, AND BETTER THAN SOME, PARTICULARLY IN LATIN AMERICA.

5. IN ADDITION, WE NOTE THAT THE RECENT PROVISION BY THE GOE OF ASSURANCES WITH REGARD TO 1976 AMENDMENTS TO SEC 505 OF THE FAA PROVIDES THE US WITH A MOST EFFECTIVE LEVER IN OBTAINING ADEQUATE SECURITY FOR US PROVIDED CLASSIFIED INFORMATION. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE GOE AGREED TO PROVIDE SECURITY ACCEPTABLE TO THE USG FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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CLASSIFIED TRAINING AND DEFENSE SERVICES. WE ASSUME MOST OF THE INFORMATION WE WOULD CONSIDER PASSING TO THE GOE WOULD FALL WITHIN THAT AREA.

6. THEREFORE, THE MISSION WISHES TO WITHDRAW ITS ILL-CONCEIVED RECOMMENDATION THAT NO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION BE PROVIDED TO ECUADOR. A REVIEW OF THE SITUATION DOES NOT MERIT SUCH A CONCLUSION, AND TO IMPOSE SUCH A PRACTICE

WOULD NOT ONLY BE UNFAIR TO ECUADOR BUT INCONSISTENT WITH OUR TREATMENT OF OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. WE BELIEVE THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION CAN AND SHOULD BE PROVIDED, ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, AND WITH APPROPRIATE NOTIFICATION TO THE GOE OF THE NATURE AND DEGREE OF CLASSIFICATION AND THE NEED TO ASSURE ADEQUATE SECURITY.

7. WITH RESPECT TO THE HAWK MISSION SYSTEM, THE MISSION HAS DETERMINED ON GROUNDS OTHER THAN THE GOE'S ABILITY TO HANDLE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION THAT THE BRIEFING REQUESTED BY THE GOE ON THE HAWK MISSILE SHOULD NOT BE SCHEDULED. GIVEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENTLY PREVAILING ATTITUDES IN WASHINGTON WE DO NOT WISH TO WHET APPETITES FOR MATERIEL WE PROBABLY CANNOT DELIVER. EMBASSY PLANS TO INFORM GOE AT AN APPROPRIATE DATE AND REQUESTS THAT DOD NOT CONVEY THE DECISION TO DENY THE BRIEFING TO ANY ECUADOREAN OFFICIALS.
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